

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 26 June 2006 from the Permanent Representative
of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President
of the Security Council**

I am pleased to send you the report of the Workshop for Newly-Elected and Present Security Council Members, which was held on 28 and 29 November 2005 at Tarrytown House (see annex). The report has been finalized in the light of comments received from the participants. The final report has been compiled in accordance with the Chatham House Rules under the sole responsibility of the Permanent Mission of Finland.

Based on the very positive feedback we received from the participants, the Government of Finland remains committed to sponsoring the workshop as an annual event. The Government of Finland expresses the hope that this report will not only assist in familiarizing newly elected members with the working methods and procedures of the Council, but also contribute to a better understanding among the wider United Nations membership of the complexity of the work of the Council.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kirsti Lintonen
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 26 June 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

"Hitting the Ground Running"

Third Annual Workshop for Newly Elected Members of the Security Council

28 and 29 November 2005

Tarrytown Conference Center

Tarrytown, New York

The Government of Finland – in cooperation with the Center on International Organization of Columbia University, the Security Council Affairs Division of the United Nations Secretariat, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) – convened the third annual workshop for the newly elected members of the Security Council on 28 and 29 November 2005.

The annual workshops have served to help familiarize the newly elected members with the practice, procedure and working methods of the Council so that they are in a position to "hit the ground running" when they join the Council the following January. The series has also provided current members of the Council with an opportunity to reflect on their work in an informal setting. The workshops have been designed to complement the annual UNITAR briefings on aspects of the Council's work.

This year, the opening evening featured remarks by Lakhdar Brahimi, Under-Secretary-General and Special Advisor to the Secretary-General. Drawing on his long experience in United Nations mediation and peacebuilding efforts, Ambassador Brahimi highlighted both the progress that had been made and five dimensions in which further improvements were needed. The latter included a knowledge deficit, resources, managing expectations, rule of law, and elections and constitutions.

The full-day programme on 29 November included five roundtable sessions on the following themes:

- I. Evolving roles and working methods
- II. Security Council committees and working groups
- III. Organization of work
- IV. Broadening inputs and outreach
- V. Implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome: implications for the Security Council

For the second session, on committees and working groups, the participants were divided into three smaller break-out groups to permit more intensive discussion and sharing of experiences.

Session I

Evolving roles and working methods

Moderator:

Ambassador Ellen Margrethe Løj
Permanent Representative of Denmark

Commentators:

Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom

Ambassador Zhang Yishan
Deputy Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China

Opening the session, the moderator observed that there was often scant difference in form between the Council's public meetings and closed (informal) consultations, both featured a tendency to read prepared statements rather than to engage in interactive, strategic debate. Too much time was also devoted to routine discussion on the extension of peacekeeping mandates. In that regard, the President should have more authority and leeway in setting the Council's agenda. Likewise, the Secretary-General's monthly luncheon with Council members should involve more strategic debate and less formal reporting. Within the Council, it was understandable that permanent members usually played a lead role in addressing long-standing items on the Council's agenda, while the non-permanent members often chaired subsidiary bodies (e.g., sanctions committees and working groups). However, to get the elected members more involved with the Council's conflict-related work, permanent members could pair with non-permanent ones in addressing specific crisis situations.

Refinements in working methods

The commentators and other speakers echoed the moderator's concerns about the overly formal nature of Council meetings and the subsequent lack of interactive and strategic debate. Participants called for fewer consultations and meetings, shorter and less frequent interventions in informal consultations, and restraint in the reading of prepared statements. According to several speakers, briefings by the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) could be abbreviated so as to allow more time for questions and discussion. This would allow the Council to hold SRSGs more fully accountable for mandate implementation, strategy, and mission discipline. Moreover, too much time was devoted to preparing the Council's press statements, a matter over which the Council President should be allowed more leeway.

One speaker held the view that there was too frequent reporting by United Nations and external speakers on routine matters, which added to the Council's burgeoning workload. The participants identified a number of ways to enhance the Council's efficiency. For instance, its agenda could be streamlined by avoiding debates on issues only tangentially related to peace and security. The information technology (IT) available to the Council could be enhanced by providing laptop computers in the Consultations Room and by utilizing videoteleconferences (VTCs) for monthly consultations with SRSGs and others. One participant suggested that it would be helpful if briefing packets were prepared for incoming members, while

another asked whether the Secretariat could disseminate its briefing notes from consultations and meetings to Council members.

A number of speakers, including the commentators, saw scope for improving the Council's transparency and effectiveness through enhanced cooperation with other United Nations organs and with external actors, such as regional organizations and the international financial institutions, on post-conflict peacebuilding issues. Several speakers commented that the monthly luncheons with the Secretary-General should be utilized for a more productive, focused, and strategic exchange of views than had often been the case. One participant called for more regular meetings between the Presidents of the Council, the General Assembly, and ECOSOC. Another urged closer cooperation with the African Union, given that African issues absorbed approximately 60 percent of the Council's time. One speaker cautioned, however, that wider consultations did not always produce better results. For example, too often efforts to reach out to troop-contributing countries (TCCs), such as through formal meetings between Council members, TCCs and the Secretariat, as provided for in resolution 1353 (2001), had become overly-formalized and yielded little in the way of real, free-thinking exchanges of views. While the Council needed to continue to look for ways to boost its transparency, it should avoid innovation for its own sake.

Thematic debates

A range of views were expressed, by the commentators and others, about the value of thematic debates, which everyone acknowledged had become a major component of the Council's work. Some participants expressed concern about the balance between thematic and country-specific debates, cautioning that the Council should avoid assuming the responsibilities of other principal organs, such as the General Assembly and ECOSOC. On the other hand, other speakers emphasized the usefulness of thematic debates, if the topics were carefully selected. Productive examples included the recent debate on peacebuilding, which included valuable interaction between the Council and the President of the World Bank, and the two recent debates on the rule of law in post-conflict situations. As another speaker noted, some of the most critical challenges facing Africa and other regions transcended traditional notions of peace and security. Thematic debates could help focus the Council's attention on such complex and cross-cutting challenges and bring valuable outside expertise to the discussion.

Nevertheless, others warned, the Council needed to maintain an appropriate balance between thematic and country-specific debates. At that point, in November 2005, the Council was said to have 21 country-specific and 21 thematic issues on its agenda. With so many issues being added to the Council's already heavy workload, it was questioned whether the Council could still fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. Others contended that thematic debates were often too general and insufficiently related to the current crises facing the Council. It was suggested that thematic debates include shorter and more focused presentations by outside speakers, along with more thorough follow-up.

Peacebuilding

In recent years, it was noted, peacebuilding had come to occupy a growing portion of the Council's attention. The proposed Peacebuilding Commission, in that regard, should be welcomed as a positive step toward enhancing the international community's overall peacebuilding capabilities. These needed to address the three pillars of successful post-conflict peacebuilding — (i) stabilization of the security situation, (ii) institution-building and promoting the rule of law, and (iii) economic recovery. One commentator underlined that, while the Council had primary responsibility for international peace and security, it did not have an exclusive role when it came to peacebuilding. Since the process of peacebuilding entailed a broad circle of stakeholders, the Council needed to be aware of what international financial institutions, regional organizations, and local actors were seeking to contribute to the common effort.

Ministerial meetings

In recent years, the Council has met more frequently at the ministerial level. Most speakers expressed mixed feelings about this practice. Such high-level sessions, it was pointed out, might be useful in drawing world attention to an emerging threat to international peace and security. They could also serve to demonstrate the Council's unity and/or resolve on a particular issue. It was also noted, however, that the substantive value of such high-level exchanges had varied and that involving ministers or heads of state in the negotiation of Council resolutions or statements could have unpredictable consequences. According to several participants, the Council should retain the option of meeting at a ministerial or summit level occasionally, but this practice should not be invoked too frequently or without careful consideration and planning.

Session II

Security Council committees and working groups

Following brief introductory remarks by Ambassador Adamantios Th. Vassilakis, the Permanent Representative of Greece, the participants divided into three break-out groups to permit more intensive discussion and sharing of their experiences with Security Council committees and working groups. Ambassador Vassilakis moderated one of the break-out groups and Ambassador Gheorghe Dumitru, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Romania, and Ambassador Ellen Margrethe Løj, the Permanent Representative of Denmark, the other two. The following is a synthesis of the discussions that took place in the three break-out groups.

Several speakers underlined the importance of the work performed by the committees and working groups, though it tended to be less visible to the press and public. The subsidiary bodies provided an essential means of encouraging and overseeing the implementation of Council decisions. However, effectively guiding one or more subsidiary organs created a substantial burden for the non-permanent members, which usually chaired these groups. For incoming members of the Council, the workload could seem especially heavy. Given the technical nature of much of their operational and monitoring work, some of the subsidiary bodies depended heavily on experts. It was critical, therefore, that they be selected carefully and that there be sufficient oversight of their work. It was suggested, for

example, that some of the monitoring groups themselves needed clearer guidance and closer supervision. Though generally chaired by Permanent Representatives, the committees and working groups tended to meet at a relatively low level, without sufficient political input, according to one participant. As another speaker put it, the very dependence of these groups on experts underscored the critical role that Permanent Representatives needed to play in their management. Several discussants asserted that the critical nature of the work carried out by the subsidiary bodies insured that they were here to stay, but one speaker questioned whether the Council had not simply gotten into the habit of creating more and more such groups as new challenges arose.

It was pointed out that some of these groups address thematic issues, some undertake operational roles, and others, like the Working Group on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, did both. In areas such as sanctions and counter-terrorism, in which a number of committees perform similar functions, the importance of coordination and sharing of lessons learned was emphasized. The chairs of these groups might meet more frequently. It was suggested by several discussants that committees and working groups should go to the Council more regularly to discuss the challenges they face. Another speaker urged chairs from non-permanent members to seek the advice of permanent members when addressing longstanding security issues. Ultimately, it was pointed out, the Council bore the responsibility for the work of its subsidiary bodies and should review them more regularly.

There was considerable discussion of, but no consensus on, the working methods of the subsidiary bodies and whether the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions should be revived for a more extended period. Why should the subsidiary groups operate under consensus rules, asked one participant, when the Council itself did not? It was suggested that the Council hold a workshop on working methods, as well as a lessons-learned exercise concerning the work of its subsidiary bodies. Some speakers contended that the Council should make greater efforts to reform its working methods, including having a working group discuss the so-called "S5" proposals (see General Assembly draft resolution A/60/L.49 of 17 March 2006). Others, however, expressed scepticism about the S5 proposals and about the wisdom of setting up a formal mechanism for the review of the Council's working methods, while agreeing on the need to take into account the views of the United Nations larger membership. Though there was no agreement on whether it would make sense to revive the Informal Working Group or to assign it the task of reviewing working methods, several participants underscored that the earlier practice of having the group be chaired by the President of the Council guaranteed a lack of continuity in its deliberations. One possibility, it was suggested, would be to have a permanent member and a non-permanent member co-chair the working group. (Following the Workshop, the members of the Security Council agreed that the chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions would be from 1 February to 30 June 2006, at which point the tenure of the Chair will be reviewed, and that the Permanent Representative of Japan would serve as Chair (Note by the President dated 31 January 2006, S/2006/66)).

The work of the sanctions committees also attracted many comments. As one speaker put it, the sanctions committees acted as the de facto executive branch of the Security Council. Though sanctions committees imposed a heavy workload on the incoming members, especially those without a lot of experience with some of

their more technical dimensions, it was noted that more sanctions regimes were likely to be mandated in the future, as they remained the Council's chief enforcement tool. The larger number of sanctions committees, however, had suggested to some the need for greater coordination and coherence. As in other areas of the Council's work, it was recommended that the chairs of the sanctions committees meet more frequently to compare lessons learned. Though the Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions had become inactive, it was in the process of being revived. According to one speaker, the proliferation of sanctions committees raised the question of whether there needed to be a distinct committee and set of monitors assigned to each sanctions regime. Could there be some sort of consolidation, through engaging experts to work on more than one sanctions regime or by permitting regional reporting for smaller states?

Several discussants commented on the recurring tensions between political considerations in a peace process and the requirements for effective implementation of Council-imposed sanctions. More effort was needed to sharpen the targeting of sanctions to ensure maximum impact on the individuals concerned and minimal negative effects on the wider population, while still achieving the Council's political objectives. More attention needed to be paid to natural resource management in those conflict-affected areas where proceeds had been used to fuel conflict. At the same time, arms embargo guidelines should be sufficiently flexible to permit adaptation to changing conditions on the ground. More attention also needed to be paid to the sources of the weapons. Too often, arms embargoes were hindered by porous borders, as in the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and weak institutions in neighbouring countries. In some cases, it was suggested, it would be helpful for the chair of the sanctions committee to have the relevant regional expertise to understand such conditions. On the other hand, others contended that some distance could be helpful in terms of providing the appearance of impartiality. Sanctions committees had to rely on the advice of experts, yet political and geographical considerations generally determined the success of their work. Too often, Council-imposed sanctions were simply not implemented. Despite these hurdles, it was observed that any delay in mandating and implementing sanctions might be interpreted by one or more parties as a lack of will on the Council's part.

The Council had frequently been criticized for lacking clear criteria for the listing and delisting of individuals for targeted sanctions, as well as for insufficient transparency in such matters. Some speakers stressed, however, that it was extremely difficult to develop objective and precise criteria. Due process might not be possible when the Council needed to act quickly at the political level. In such cases, scrutiny needed to be balanced with efficacy. Nevertheless, it was underscored that experts were not prosecutors, nor sanctions committees courts. One participant, commenting that movement on due process questions was taking place too slowly and urging the chairs of the sanctions committees to get together to consider how to proceed, warned that at some point one of several European courts might question one of the Council's listing decisions. Another speaker responded that it would undermine the Council's authority under Chapter VII for a court to make such a finding. According to a third discussant, it would be dangerous to conceive of the Council as having absolute, unconstrained power, and none of this needed to transpire if the Council simply took human rights standards into account in such cases. One possibility would be to establish an ombudsman post, perhaps

staffed from the OHCHR, for those seeking delisting, whether related to 1267 or another sanctions regime, such as the one concerning Liberia. Those with complaints, it was said, needed a place to go if recourse to the Committee proved impractical.

In terms of counter-terrorism, it was asserted that, despite a certain lack of coherence among the Council's four relatively young subsidiary bodies in this field, their establishment had helped to shore up global defences against terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) required substantial reporting from the Member States and that, in turn, imposed a heavy workload on the members and staff of the CTC. The work, moreover, had become increasingly frustrating with each new round of reporting. It was recommended that the CTC undertake an annual review of its work and provide United Nations Member States with a statement of its forward strategy. The 1566 Working Group, on the other hand, was described as a somewhat unhappy compromise that had become a "lonely child" of the Council with an uncertain future.

Session III

Organization of work

Moderator:

Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière
Permanent Representative of France

Commentators:

Ambassador Bayani S. Mercado
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines

Ambassador Gheorghe Dumitru
Permanent Representative of Romania

The moderator observed that the proliferation of work and subsidiary machinery of the Security Council had made it difficult for non-members to follow new developments. Improving transparency remained an important priority, though the Council had taken a number of steps to reform its working methods over the past ten to fifteen years. These included the introduction of political coordinators, the earlier preparation of the monthly programme of work (POW), and the closer association of non-members with the work of the Council. The latter was reflected in the drafting of the recent resolution on Côte d'Ivoire. The Council continued to display its case-by-case flexibility, such as through the development and use of "informal informals" when needed.

To one of the commentators, the Secretariat served as the "right and left hand" of the Presidency. By providing information and acting as institutional memory, the Secretariat could help level the playing field for the non-permanent members. Echoing the moderator's comments about preserving the Council's flexibility, he agreed that a rigid codification of the Council's rules of procedure would be a mistake. The other commentator highlighted the important role of political coordinators, whose efforts insured that the Council could function continuously, as called for by Article 28 (1). The pace and breadth of the Council's work, in his words, made service on the Council a "perpetual apprenticeship".

Role of the Secretariat

Participants agreed that the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs provided immense help to non-permanent members concerning the practices and working methods of the Council. Critically, the Security Council Affairs Division provided essential information for elected members preparing for the Presidency. One participant asked whether the Security Council Affairs Division had a document about the Council's practices and procedures that could be provided for the use of newly-elected members. Another participant urged the Security Council Affairs Division to help maintain the Council's flexibility by recommending positive modifications to procedures, rather than citing precedent.

Political coordinators

The development of the network of political coordinators was widely cited as a welcome innovation. They had been able to serve both individual delegations by providing an additional voice on substantive issues and the Council as a whole by ensuring continuity, by playing a critical role in preparing for and carrying out the Presidency, and by acting as a network for information-sharing and negotiation. However, one participant contended that, while political coordinators acted as essential focal points, their job was not 'political' as such. Rather, the Ambassadors were the overall political coordinators. Nevertheless, there was general agreement that political coordinators were a useful addition, serving a particularly important function for their respective delegation's Presidency.

Efficiency, time management and the role of the Presidency

For incoming members, it was noted, learning how to handle the Council's heavy and varied workload could be a major part of the learning process. A number of speakers commented on how cumbersome the workload of the Council had become. Since a significant proportion of the work was self-generated, it was suggested that there was much that Council members could do to improve the situation. A major impediment, raised repeatedly throughout the workshop, was the tendency for members to read prepared speeches, even in informal consultations. Reading speeches slowed the process and limited the Council's ability to have interactive and strategic consultations. One participant emphasized, however, that capitals sometimes insisted on references to a prepared text to preserve political nuance and to ensure that an accurate record was kept of the proceedings.

According to several speakers, part of the problem related to time management and the distribution of time between lower and higher priority tasks. The often lengthy negotiation of press statements, for example, implied a lack of confidence in the President. With regard to consultations, one participant suggested that, for routine issues, the President could identify in advance where consensus existed and invite members to speak only if they disagreed. Too much time, it was argued, was spent on commenting on non-controversial reports of the Secretary-General. This tendency might be reduced, it was suggested, if members were given more time before reports were formally considered or resolutions were brought to a vote.

Session IV

Broadening inputs and outreach

Moderator:

Ambassador Kenzo Oshima
Permanent Representative of Japan

Commentators:

Ambassador Mourad Benmehidi
Deputy Permanent Representative of Algeria

Ambassador Bodehoussé Idohou
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Benin

Ambassador Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg
Permanent Representative of Brazil

The opening comments and the discussion that followed focused on three ways in which the Security Council had been seeking to broaden both the inputs into its work and its own outreach efforts: missions to the field; a more inclusive approach to its deliberations; and greater interaction with United Nations agencies, experts, and NGOs. Much of the discussion focused on the efficacy of Security Council missions. While there was general agreement on their usefulness, questions were raised about time and resource constraints, when they should be undertaken, who should participate, and what their terms of reference and objectives should be. On the matter of involving other Member States and of reaching out to agencies, experts, and NGOs, several participants commented that, while there had been progress, the Security Council was still not doing enough to ensure transparency and inclusiveness.

Security Council missions

All agreed that Security Council missions were a useful way for members to develop a clearer and deeper understanding of the circumstances and challenges of the situation on the ground. However, several speakers commented that fact-finding was only one of several purposes that could be served by such missions. They could contribute to conflict prevention, stabilization, and settlement, to sending a message to the parties concerning the Council's commitment and unity, and even to laying the basis for a mid-course correction. Among the successful missions cited were those to Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burundi.

With respect to the content and agenda of Security Council missions, one participant underlined the importance of acquiring independent sources of information above and beyond that received in Special Representatives' periodic reports. The missions' agendas should, therefore, be targeted at investigation, assessment, and reinforcing the presence of the United Nations in-country. As one of the commentators cautioned, these should not become peacekeeping inspection tours and the participants should bear in mind that the information and assessments they received were filtered through the perspectives of their interlocutors. Through all of this, it was essential that the Council maintain an independent evaluation of the situation. There were differences of view concerning whether the missions tended to

be over-scheduled. Some participants stressed the importance of hearing from local civil society, United Nations agencies, and other non-governmental actors, while others argued that a programme that was too heavy with multiple voices could be confusing and counterproductive.

What criteria should the Council use when weighing the costs and benefits of a proposed mission? One commentator urged that each situation be considered on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, dispatching smaller missions, in which not all Council members participate, was seen as a viable resource-saving option. An example was Ambassador Oshima's recent visit to Ethiopia-Eritrea. Another participant emphasized the importance of timing. Sometimes there was a sense of urgency, but the aim should always be to generate concrete results. It was also noted that, while permanent members had generally led missions in the past, elected members could also take the initiative, as Brazil had done with the joint Security Council-ECOSOC mission to Haiti. It was pointed out that missions being considered for 2006 included West Africa, Afghanistan, and Kosovo.

Working with other Member States

Several speakers pointed out that the Security Council had taken a number of steps over the past decade to improve transparency and inclusiveness. Consultations with troop-contributing countries (TCCs) had become systematic, though they could be livelier and more dynamic. More space had been allocated for interested countries to articulate their views before and after a resolution had been adopted. The Council's subsidiary bodies had often taken the lead in reaching out to other actors and Member States. However, more could be done in the future. One commentator noted that many Member States and non-governmental actors continued to feel that their relationship with the Council was weak, ad hoc, and sporadic. Some resolutions that imposed obligations on all Member States had been adopted without sufficient consultation. Consensus-building could be very helpful in such cases. Often, input from Member States with a particular interest in or experience with an issue could enhance the Council's deliberations and improve the results.

To address these deficits, several suggestions were offered. The Council's annual report to the General Assembly could be made more analytical. Interactions with the General Assembly and ECOSOC could become more regular and less formal. A wrap-up session could be provided for the wider membership at the end of each month. Council members could hold more frequent briefings for members of their regional group, as elected members were said to have a special responsibility for reaching out to non-members. Tempering this view, some felt that, while the Council had a duty to reach out to the wider membership, it could not be everything to everyone.

NGOs, experts and agencies

According to several participants, the Arria formula continued to be a useful way to introduce independent perspectives and fresh information into Security Council deliberations. One speaker highlighted the importance of promoting contact with civil society organizations from around the world, including through Council missions, and not just with those represented in New York. Inputs should not be limited to those from organizations that agree with most of the Council's members.

A full spectrum of views should be heard. Participants felt that it was crucial for the Council to listen and respond to the concerns of other Member States, as well as to those of civil society and other non-governmental actors. However, cautioned one commentator, NGOs should not be allowed to take over agenda-setting for the Council.

Session V

Implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome: implications for the Security Council

Moderator:

Ambassador Konstantin K. Dolgov
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation

Commentators:

Ambassador Alberto D'Alotto
Deputy Permanent Representative of Argentina

Ambassador Augustine P. Mahiga
Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania

The moderator outlined the five principal topics of the session: (i) the Peacebuilding Commission; (ii) counter-terrorism; (iii) Africa; (iv) United Nations reform; and (v) the appointment of the next Secretary-General. At the time of the workshop, negotiations over the Peacebuilding Commission's composition were continuing in the General Assembly. It was hoped that the General Assembly would soon agree on the text of a comprehensive counter-terrorism convention. Implementation of resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa, was characterized as challenging. Debate continued on the possible reform and expansion of the Security Council. It was underlined that the choice of the next Secretary-General would be of major importance to the United Nations and its Member States.

Counter-terrorism

One of the commentators emphasized the importance of achieving consensus on a counter-terrorism convention, given recent atrocities in London, Egypt, and Indonesia, and stressed the United Nations place as the natural forum for developing a global counter-terrorism strategy. The Security Council had been active over the previous year in opposing terrorism, while the Secretary-General had provided a useful set of strategies in his March 2005 speech in Madrid. Yet General Assembly negotiations on a comprehensive convention appeared to be stalled over the issue of defining acts of terror. Commending the Council's efforts, another speaker noted that the Council currently had four subsidiary bodies devoted to counter-terrorism. This proliferation of effort, however, now called out for enhanced coordination and coherence of mandates.

Peacebuilding Commission

One of the commentators stressed the importance of the proposed Peacebuilding Commission in global post-conflict recovery efforts, including the

need for inclusion of countries that had experienced conflict and its aftermath. The Security Council would necessarily have an important role to play in the Peacebuilding Commission, both at the organizational and country levels. One speaker recalled that the Commission, as an advisory body, would have to reflect the primacy of the Security Council in matters of peace and security. Another participant noted that Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone would be likely candidates for early attention and assistance by the proposed Commission. Peacekeeping operations needed to bolster their peacebuilding capabilities, including in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform (SSR), institution-building for civil functions such as human rights and justice, and humanitarian relief. It was suggested that the Security Council might have to create additional subsidiary bodies to relate to the diversity of actors and issues involved in peacebuilding.

Africa

According to several speakers, international attention still needed to be focused on the special needs of the African continent. The Security Council should take into account how assistance, debt and trade decisions made in national capitals could affect the stability and security of African states. The strengthening of the African Union's peacekeeping capacity should remain a long-term priority for the Security Council, as should the immediate task of forging closer linkages with the AU Peace and Security Council. One commentator described resolution 1625 (2005) as a virtual "gold mine" of practical suggestions for conflict prevention in Africa. However, he warned, much needed to be done to implement these ideas.

Appointment of the next Secretary-General

One speaker urged the permanent members to exercise restraint with respect to vetoing promising Secretary-General candidates. He also suggested that candidates from large countries or permanent members should not be excluded from consideration merely on the basis of their nationality. One participant suggested that terms of reference for the position be drawn up, so that Member States could better weigh the merits of various candidates. Another suggested that, in the choice of the candidate, primacy should be given to the region of Asia. A third speaker contended that merit, not geographical rotation, should be the chief criterion for selection of the next Secretary-General, a critical choice at a critical point in the life of the Organization.

Other reform issues

Several participants welcomed the articulation of the principle of the responsibility to protect by heads of state and government at the September 2005 United Nations Summit. This was a major accomplishment, noted one speaker, as there had been considerable trepidation in his region that this principle could be used to rationalize intervention in the guise of protection. It was now understood, however, that the principle of the responsibility to protect was to apply only to the most egregious human rights violations and that non-coercive responses would be considered by the Council before any resort to collective action under Chapter VII.

The question of Security Council reform generated only a handful of general comments. One speaker suggested, however, that the current Security Council was

not sufficiently representative of the membership at large. By his calculations, seven of the Council's current 15 members either were or were aspiring to be part of the Western European and Others Group (WEOG), while members of the much larger non-aligned movement (NAM) occupied only four seats around the Council table. Others suggested that the conversation at the workshop confirmed that any reform of the Council should extend far beyond its composition.
